

No

Yes

# Voting Age 18?

No

by Judy Samoil

The question of lowering the the voting age is one which the government has recently been considering, and if the students at U of A lobby to support this recommendation it will greatly enhance the chance of its being passed. The arguments favoring a decrease from 21, federal requirement, and 19 provincial, down to 18 have already been tossed a r o u n d innumerable times in politicking, but are none the less valid.

One of the most frequently cited arguments is that people can give their lives for their country and so should at least be able to have some say in how it is run.

Young people today are also on the average better educated, most having reached at least grade 12. By 18 nearly all young people have made a decision regarding their future and are either continuing toward a profession or are already out working. If they can make this important choice affecting the rest of their lives, then they should be allowed to make one affecting a few years of the government's operation.

Another important factor in favor of a lower voting age is

that most people of that age have already been out working, if only for a summer or part-time. This means they have been contributing income tax as well as other deductions into the government funds. If their money is going to the government these young people should at least have some say in what is going to be done with it.

Increased political awareness through mass media is one of the outstanding characteristics of our time, with people being better educated about what issues are at stake. A broad spectrum of viewpoints are often available and a young person has as much insight into an issue as his father or grandfather. Often he will have less accumulated bias and can make a more unemotional, and hence intellectual decision than them.

The province of Alberta recently lowered the voting age to 19 and doesn't seem to have suffered any ill effects. There was no sudden rise to power of irresponsible young candidates for government positions. The age group of 18 to 25 is one of the largest in the population and the younger years form a large faction affected by government legislation. They should have a say in these decisions.

by Dan Jamieson

For the sake of argument

Anyone who is under 20 and not a socialist is hard of heart; anyone who is over 30 and still a socialist is hard of head.

This paraphrase from one of Robert Stanfield's speeches is my primary argument against the lowering of the voting age. I would rather see people who have had enough time to live out their fantasies and cast their ballots on the basis of practical considerations, rather than the bleeding heart considerations of the young.

Certainly it is both nice, and I think right to help the poor and the underprivileged, but practical considerations must be given their due as well.

The younger the individual, the more these practical considerations go by the board, the more he takes into account ideals over practical considerations of the makeup of the human animal.

The more one lives in a world of ideas, as young people do, the less he will use his head in casting his ballot. The voting and decision making in any government structure should be left to those who have lost their

illusions.

One of the great arguments used in favor of the lowering of the voting age, the fact that the army enlistment age is only 16, can be applied against itself.

All that is required to commit murder is a weapon, an emotion, and preferably, but not always, a high degree of idiocy.

It is unfortunate that murder in the form of war often becomes necessary. Judging from his reaction to the Vietnam war, the young person, who we may allow to vote, would elect someone who would allow the enemy to overrun our shores, apparently believing that the enemy would be a nice peace-loving guy if we were to be nice peace-loving guys. The younger voter could easily have the emotional wool pulled over his eyes, whereas the more senior voter would not allow himself to be so easily duped.

A case in point is that of our own prime minister. Elected largely on the young person's vote, Mr. Trudeau has failed to fulfill his responsibilities to almost all segments of the population. Lost in his philosophies, he has considered the question of Red China, while ignoring the Canadian wheat problem.

ables, drunk on the side- left for the salvation army e police, who "know how ndle this type."

will die sooner or later infected kidney or a rot- ver, he can do nothing but ime, and might cut your est for the promise of a ak, so why bother with him. is moral and physical de- tion is almost complete, usny life he has left will soon out of him. They may not ave to waste any embalm- usid on him, his organs are nly being pickled.

ing this is everyone, young rld alike, who have or will e glass in hand.

und what will they win. Re- ucen by a society which will l them deeper into the ead, a haze to hide them from ay.

obth all this at stake, should ol be allowed? I think in. The many who claim that r are not alcoholics, but e'y like the occasional social b would not suffer extreme- hout booze, and, if a gen- ehan on the substance were Haced, they could be saving rill millions from the degrad- ind morally suffocating stuff r liquor. I would say that und be worth it.

## Opinion poll

### Voting



"Why have a drinking age at all? They talk about legalizing marijuana, but if people don't have mature attitudes toward drinking, how can they form mature judgments of marijuana?"

Richard Schick arts 1



"I think they should lower the voting age. People should become more involved."

Rony Kash arts 1



"I think the age should be lowered, but only to 19. Until that time you haven't had enough education to understand the issues."

Werner Kiefer eng 1



"18 is a good age—a universal age for everything. You can join the army at 17 and go to restricted adult movies, etc., so why not vote?"

Barry McLaren arts 1



"Not for the campus. There are too many immature individuals there, and they could cause a lot of trouble. It may be all right off campus. They drink anyway."

Terry Olstad ed 1



"No. The majority of people 19 and under aren't capable of responsibilities that go with voting."

Walter Neilson sci 2



"It should definitely be lowered to 18. As T. C. Douglas says, 'If you can fight for your country you should vote'. Trudeau talks about participatory democracy, so he should get them while they're young."

Lionel Lizée arts 3

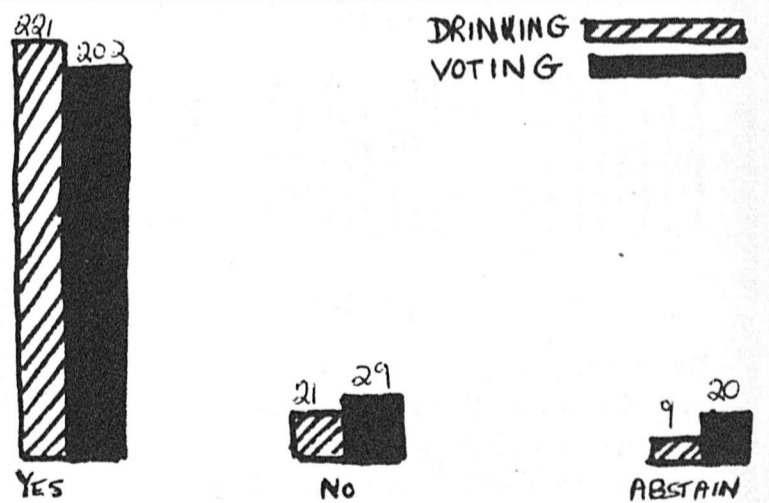


"Yes. If people are old enough to work and pay taxes they should be allowed to have a say in where the taxes are going."

Rita Lacombe ed 2

—John Hushagen photos

In today's opinion poll by The Gateway, the following results were obtained in answer to two questions: "Do you think students would favor lowering the drinking age to 18 if the students' union holds a referendum on the question?", and "Do you think students would favor lowering the voting age for provincial and federal elections to 18 if the students' union holds a referendum on the question?"



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